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Observe how the apostle unfolds this truth of who our enemy truly is in **:12**: **:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.** Recognize this unseen reality: This struggle, this battle, this conflict, is not against other human beings; our enemy is not someone like us, made of flesh and blood. No, our enemy has rulers and powers, world forces and spiritual forces; he's got an organized army of demons who do his bidding. Apparently when Satan was cast out of heaven because he pridefully wanted to be like God, one-third of the angels went with him (**Rev. 12:7-9**). Now we know those former angels as 'demons'—wicked, powerful, organized, spiritual squadrons who are also out to destroy and deceive, just like their leader. Notice how they're described:

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THEREFORE, BECAUSE—of our formidable enemy, he is crafty, he is organized with many forces, he is strong, struggles are inevitable, it's a spiritual battle—the third command is to **take up God's full armor**. Take it up in order to use it! Again, it's the only way of victory. We'll be able to resist in the evil day. We'll be able to stand our ground. Victory is assured when God's plans are followed. He has provided everything needed for walking worthy. There are evil days; oh, how evil they are and how vulnerable we are, but thank the Lord, not every day is evil. Even with Jesus when the devil tempted Him, ...**when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time (Lk. 4:13)**. There are wicked days, days when everything seems against us, that everything is falling apart, that the battle seems too great, that we're more easily misled, that there doesn't seem any end. However, this verse teaches that we can stand firm and resist even in the midst of those days. There is no enemy too great or circumstance too overwhelming for which God hasn't fully supplied.

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Observe how the apostle unfolds this truth of who our enemy truly is in **:12**. **:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.** Recognize this unseen reality: This struggle, this battle, this conflict, is not against other human beings; our enemy is not someone like us, made of flesh and blood. No, our enemy has rulers and powers, world forces and spiritual forces; he's got an organized army of demons who do his bidding. Apparently when Satan was cast out of heaven because he pridefully wanted to be like God, one-third of the angels went with him (**Rev. 12:7-9**). Now we know those former angels as 'demons'—wicked, powerful, organized, spiritual squadrons who are also out to destroy and deceive, just like their leader. Notice how they're described:

but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses." We are to do battle with the safeguards He's provided. "Lord Jesus, You and Your strength are my answer during evil days. May I realize my own human, worldly resources are absolutely futile during these periods of intense attack, yet through Your Life and power, I can walk in victory; I can stand firm."

:11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. The second command is to put on the complete, life-long gear God has furnished. The reason we are to put on this Divine armor is because we have an enemy, known by many names in the Scriptures, but here referred to as the devil, which means accuser/slanderer (the word Satan means adversary). This opponent is always trying to malign or tear down Christians. In fact, in **Jn. 8:44 (read)**, Jesus describes the devil as *a murderer and a liar*, a destroyer and a deceiver. Jesus says *there is no truth in him!* Notice, NO truth at all! **In Eph. 4:21** we learned the truth is in Jesus. The devil is an evil, cunning, powerful, invisible, organized foe against whom no human being in his/her own strength and resources is a match.

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forces of darkness, goons of wickedness; they're never out to accomplish good. They operate in the heavenlies, the invisible realities all around us.

The devil and his demons try to deceive us by making us believe that our enemy is people or nations or circumstances. If we are misled, we'll never win because we've mistaken the enemy. Although people and governments and circumstances may be used as his tools, our battle is not against them but against Satan and his forces. We're to look to the source of the problems, not his tools. Later we'll see we're to look to the launcher of the missiles, not give all our attention to the missiles themselves. Our enemy is out to throw us off balance, to confuse us, to mistake our adversary, to ignore God's provision, to get us to operate by our flesh/feelings/worldly pressures. If he can accomplish any of these, he's won that battle. We have a powerful, tricky opponent, and in our own strength we'll be defeated every time. We're to take seriously the foe, his methods, his followers, and use the weapons that God has richly supplied.

A sobering word study is the word struggle; it means to wrestle, to hold another down. I've read that in Greek times, the defeated wrestlers lost their eyes. If true or regardless, this is no simple, harmless game we're involved in!

:13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

THEREFORE, BECAUSE—of our formidable enemy, he is crafty, he is organized with many forces, he is strong, struggles are inevitable, it's a spiritual battle—the third command is to **take up God's full armor**. Take it up in order to use it! Again, it's the only way of victory. We'll be able to resist in the evil day. We'll be able to stand our ground. Victory is assured when God's plans are followed. He has provided everything needed for walking worthy. There are evil days; oh, how evil they are and how vulnerable we are, but thank the Lord, not every day is evil. Even with Jesus when the devil tempted Him, ... **when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time (Lk. 4:13)**. There are wicked days, days when everything seems against us, that everything is falling apart, that the battle seems too great, that we're more easily misled, that there doesn't seem any end. However, this verse teaches that we can stand firm and resist even in the midst of those days. There is no enemy too great or circumstance too overwhelming for which God hasn't fully supplied.

Remember who God has created you (**2:4-10, :19-22, 4:24**), be continually allowing the Holy Spirit to fill you (**5:18**), and walk in recognition of the Lordship and presence of the Lord Jesus (**5:21**). What are we waiting for? Let's be strong in the Lord, put on His full armor, and take up everything He's provided. It's God's strength, His armor, the only way for success. Therefore, by faith obey the commands of these four verses. We can't lose the ultimate war, because we belong to the Lord Jesus and He won (**Heb. 2:14**)! So, when encountering evil periods of time, intense periods of struggle against the forces of evil, take up! Stand firm! To arms!

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Practical Ways to **Apply** God's Word:

1. Start with Jesus (**Mt. 11:28-30**) and fix your focus on Him (**Heb. 12:1-3**). Practice ECRAT: Examine, Confess, Review, Allow, and Thank.
2. As part of your immediate family, you have a responsible role to play as a husband, wife, parent, child. Be sure you're remaining true to who you are.
3. Then as part of the Family of God, pray for, love, be hospitable to, and serve one another, using your Spirit-given gifts (**1 Pet. 4:7-11**). Also, consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds (**Heb. 10:24-25**). Do good to all **Gal. 6:10**.
4. Then as an individual Christian: **Rom. 12:9-21, 1 Cor. 13:1-8a, Eph. 4:20-6:18, and 1 Pet. 2:11-3:17** spell out how Jesus will live out His life and love uniquely through you as you trust Him, rest in Him.
5. Be careful who you listen to and what you watch and read, what you're continually thinking about. Choose & be a good role model. Be sure there's a steady input from God's Word. Pray without ceasing. Realize there's a glorious, certain, guaranteed future for you and every other Christian.

Remember, this is a life and love only Jesus through the Holy Spirit can live in/through you! Yet He will as you by faith run the race set before you (**Heb. 12:1-2a**).

Lessons you learned? Applications you made? Questions you have? What impact does this passage have on your daily walk with Jesus?

What is your prayer in light of the truths of this passage? Write it out.

Additional notes:

D. L. Moody to Cambridge students when they gathered to ridicule his message because of his 'ignorant' speech. "Don't ever think God don't love you, for He do!" After they heard those words, they listened to his message attentively!!

Someone asked me if there was a difference between the 'flesh' & 'demonic influence'. I answered (based on **Gal. 5:16-25** and **Eph. 6:10-18**), "Yes, the thinking and/or behavior apart from counting on the indwelling Spirit of God (the flesh) is a daily temptation; I'm susceptible to its passions and desires on a continual basis. I have found that learning to walk by the Spirit continually is the moment-by-moment solution to the 'flesh'. But oh, those evil days!

Let's together learn how to Biblically handle them, and also, not mistake the enemy! Paul actually names the enemy! I'm sure we'd list several people by name if we were asked to list our enemies, but the apostle surprises us by not naming any human beings or governments or political parties!

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